



City of Cambridge Community Development Department **SIGNAGE & LIGHTING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM** **GUIDELINES**

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Cambridge Community Development Department (CDD) has established a Signage and Lighting Improvement Program which offers technical and financial assistance to property owners and tenants seeking to improve the signage and lighting of their commercial storefronts.

The program is part of the City's ongoing efforts to help revitalize its commercial districts as well as businesses that operate outside of a commercial district. The program's objectives are threefold: to enhance the physical appearance of storefronts and, thus, overall streetscape; to increase safety through additional appropriate storefront lighting; and to build a stronger customer base for individual stores and commercial districts.

The program will provide a matching grant of up to \$3,500 to be used for the fabrication and installation of new permanent signage and/or lighting. The restoration of an historic storefront's signage and/or lighting may also be eligible. A consultant retained by the City will be available to provide assistance to applicants through the conceptual design stage at no cost to the applicants. Applicants, however, will be responsible to hire qualified professionals to implement the City-approved designs, including installation.

Signage and lighting improvements made prior to approval of an application by the Review Committee will not be funded through this program.

II. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All of the following criteria must be met for participation in the program:

- Applicants must be property owners or commercial tenants whose storefronts face onto Cambridge streets;
- Tenants must have written approval from property owners to participate in program;
- If deemed necessary by the Review Committee, applicants must clean facades before approval of funding (the cost of cleaning will not be covered by the City);
- Properties must be in conformance with State and local code requirements; and
- Applicants must comply with all State and local laws and regulations pertaining to licensing and permits.

III. DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

Signage and lighting to be funded by the program must be compatible with the character and architecture of the individual building as well as, to the extent appropriate, with other buildings along the street on which the participating storefront is located. This principle is particularly important for historic buildings and streetscapes. The addition or replacement of signage and lighting for buildings not having notably historic or architectural features should still be carefully considered and be seen as an opportunity to significantly enhance the appearance of the buildings and their streetscapes. As improvements are being contemplated, the following basic design considerations should be noted:

Scale – Will the size of the proposed signage and lighting be compatible to the size of the storefront and building?

Placement – Will the proposed placement of the signage be easily seen by potential customers? Will the proposed placement and **intensity** of lighting properly illuminate the storefront and window display without being a distracting element on the street?

Lettering – Will the visual message on the proposed signage be legible and attractive?

Color – Will the color scheme be compatible with the rest of the building's exterior?

Texture – Will the design and materials used provide an interesting three-dimensionality to make my storefront subtly stand out without being displeasing?

Attractiveness – Will all the above combined elements create an attractively cohesive storefront which will help draw customers into my business?

All improvements must comply with standards set forth in the City's zoning ordinance and building codes.

A. Eligible Signage

Signage funded through the program must follow the guidelines outlined below.

1. Must be new or the restoration of historic signage;
2. Must be made of durable material;
3. May include the business name, street address, phone number, type of business, business logo, and other business-related symbols/pictorials;
4. Must *not* contribute to or produce a cluttered storefront appearance;
5. Interior signage must enhance the storefront and be easily visible from the street;
6. Awning or canopies must also serve as signage (i.e., display business name and/or other relevant information, logos, symbols or pictorials);
7. Color scheme and size must be complementary to building facade;
8. Must *not* display brand names of products;
9. All other signage may be considered and approved under the reasonable discretion of the Review Committee.

B. Eligible Lighting

Lighting funded through the program must follow the guidelines outlined below.

1. Must be new or the restoration of historic lighting;
2. Must only be for the purpose of illuminating storefront or adjacent on-site parking;
3. May illuminate signage, storefront window displays, and recessed areas of building façade;
4. Must be installed in a manner that will prevent direct light from shining onto any street or adjacent property;
5. Intensity of illumination must be appropriate for area to be lighted as determined by industry standards;
6. Type of lighting (i.e., gooseneck lamps, studio lights, etc.) must be appropriate for location on/in storefront and for type of business; and
7. All other lighting may be considered and approved under the reasonable discretion of the Review Committee.

C. Prior Improvements

Alterations and improvements made prior to receiving a “Notice to Proceed with Improvements” are not eligible for reimbursement.

D. Alterations

The applicant must agree not to change or alter the signage and/or lighting without prior written approval from CDD for two-and-a-half (2.5) years from the date of the rebate check issued under the Signage and Lighting Improvement Program.

IV. PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

A. Financial Assistance

Funding offered will be a matching grant in which the City will *reimburse* the applicant fifty percent (50%) of total project cost or up to \$3,500, whichever is less. The applicant's match may be in the form of other financial aid (grant or loan) received from other agencies and/or banks. Applicants will only be reimbursed by the City after the applicant has paid his/her contractor(s) and vendor(s) in full and after the project is determined to have been completed in accordance with the contract between the City and applicant.

B. Technical Assistance

Technical assistance will be provided free-of-cost to prospective applicants by City staff and the design consultant hired by the City. The design consultant, along with CDD staff, will provide guidance on signage and lighting improvements specific to individual storefronts. With the review and approval by CDD staff, the consultant will prepare a conceptual design based upon discussions with the applicant. The applicant is expected to hire signage and lighting professionals to carry forth this conceptual design, from obtaining further detailed specifications

to ordering/customizing the signage and lighting to installation. The City and consultant will monitor the progress of the project to ensure compliance with the "Scope of Services" outlined in the contract between the City and applicant.

Early meetings with City staff are necessary in order to help avoid misunderstanding as to the eligibility of proposals.

V. PROCEDURE

All prospective applicants must follow the procedures in the order outlined below.

1. Applicant calls City staff for initial project discussion;
2. Applicant files an application with CDD;
3. Applicant meets with City staff and design consultant to further discuss program and design alternatives;
4. Design consultant prepares and submits conceptual design and budget estimate to applicant and CDD for review;
5. Upon approval of design by Review Committee, CDD will send a "Notice to Proceed with Soliciting Bids" to the applicant;
6. Applicant has sixty (60) days to solicit and submit three written bids for each improvement from signage and lighting contractors/vendors. *Signage proposals must include drawings and color scheme and must indicate materials to be used and location(s) to be installed on facade. Lighting proposals must include drawings or pictures from catalogue, if applicable, and must indicate type(s) of lighting, color(s), location(s) to be installed, and illumination intensity of individual lights;*
7. If all the bids reflect the proposed improvements discussed and in the conceptual design, applicant signs a contract with the City of Cambridge. The maximum funding amount indicated on the contract will be based upon the lowest bid for each proposed improvement¹;
8. CDD sends applicant a "Notice to Proceed with Improvements". **Any work completed prior to receiving the "Notice to Proceed with Improvements" will not be reimbursed;**
9. Applicant has thirty (30) days from the execution date of the contract to begin implementation of approved improvements. **Any changes previously agreed upon and contracted must have prior approval of CDD.** It is up to the applicant to notify CDD of these changes;
10. Applicant enters into agreement(s) with the signage and lighting contractor(s)/vendor(s) to carry out design, order lighting fixtures, and install signage and lighting. *These particular agreements are solely between the applicant and contractor(s)/vendor(s) and are not the responsibility of the City;*
11. Applicant notifies CDD once project is completed;
12. City staff and design consultant determine whether or not improvements were made in compliance of drawings/pictures and specifications. The project contractor(s) must submit letters to the CDD acknowledging full payment by the applicant. The applicant must submit to the CDD copies of all paid invoices; and
13. The City of Cambridge, Community Development Department, issues a rebate check.

¹ Applicant may reject the lowest bidder(s), with CDD approval, if there is a good and substantiated reason.

CDD reserves the right to make adjustments regarding conditions and parameters outlined in these guidelines.

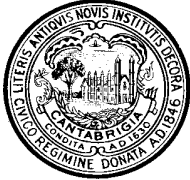
VI. TERMINATION

The City of Cambridge has the right to terminate any agreement under the Signage and Lighting Improvement Program if a participant is found to be in violation of any conditions set forth in these guidelines or if the project has been started prior to an executed agreement with the City of Cambridge.

VII. APPLICATION AND INFORMATION

If you wish to participate in the program and would like to set up a meeting with the Signage and Lighting Improvement staff or if you would like additional information, please contact Christopher Basler at CDD, 617-349-4601 (voice) or 617-349-4621 (TTY), or e-mail at cbasler@cambridgema.gov.

The City of Cambridge Signage and Lighting Improvement Program does not discriminate on the basis of disability. The program will provide auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures to persons with disabilities upon request.



City of Cambridge Community Development Department
SIGNAGE & LIGHTING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
APPLICATION FORM

DATE: _____

I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

1. Applicant's Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Telephone Number(s): _____
Fax Number: _____
E-mail: _____ Web Site: _____
2. Business Organization of Applicant:
☐ Corporation (d/b/a) or ☐ Partnership or ☐ Sole Proprietorship
Business Name: _____
3. Owners and Officers in Applicant's Business Organization

Position	Name and Address
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
4. Relationship of Applicant to the building to be renovated under the Signage & Lighting Improvement Program:
☐ Owner: Attach proof of ownership (tax bills, title deed, etc)
☐ Tenant: a) Attach terms, length, and expiration date of present lease, and
 b) Attach written permission from building owner to participate in Signage & Lighting Improvement Program

II. PROPOSED PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Description of participating building:
Street Address: _____
Section _____ Block _____ Lot(s) _____
2. What improvement(s) are you interested in receiving funding for from the Signage & Lighting Improvement Program?
☐ Signage ☐ Lighting ☐ Both
Describe the type of signage and/or lighting proposed:

3. Describe any other improvement(s) that have been recently undertaken or are planning to be undertaken for this building:

4. Please indicate the amount you have budgeted for this project. List a specific dollar value or range. The amount you list will effect the design provided by the City's consulting architect:

5. Please indicate the funding source(s) of the 1 to 1 match:

6. Please list any loans that you are seeking in connection with this project (include name/type of loan, amount and source or financial institution):

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned hereby represents and certifies to the best of his/her knowledge and belief that the information contained on this statement and any exhibits or attachments hereto are true and complete and accurately describe the proposed project, and the undersigned agrees to promptly inform the City of Cambridge Community Development Department of any changes in the proposed project which may occur.

Signature of Owner

Date

Print Name

Signature of Commercial Tenant (if Applicant)

Date

Print Name

Social Security #: _____

Tax ID#: _____